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ABSTRACT

This book explores the practice of testing. Two postulates are assumed: that student assessment should improve performance, rather than just monitoring it, and that testing should be only a small facet of assessment. The first chapter, "Introduction: Assessment and the Morality of Testing," considers what assessment is and how it differs from testing. Chapter 2, "Assessment Worthy of the Liberal Arts," maps out the intellectual problem involved in assessment that examines a student's habit of mind. In the third, fourth, and fifth chapters ("The Morality of Test Security," "Testing and Tact," and "Incentives and Assessment"), moral issues that surround testing but are rarely discussed are explored, including secrecy, incentives in testing, and the obligations of the assessor. The sixth chapter, "Feedback," considers the importance of feedback, and the seventh, "Authenticity, Context, and Validity," analyzes traditional arguments about test validity and why traditional validation methods are inadequate. The final chapter, "Accountability: Standards, Not Standardization," discusses why more testing, in principle, cannot provide better accountability. Standardized testing has little to do with whether schools are more responsive to parent, student, alumni, or institutional customer concerns. (Contains 8 exhibits and 171 references.) (SLD)

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